1921

15a

Monk's House
Rodmell.

Sunday May 22nd.

Dearest,

I was very glad to hear from you, the account of Mrs Lloyd delighting me. What a nuisance about Versailles! Oh my panty must be removed from the terrace to a back street. I don't think your proverbial wisdom meets my arguments about the influenza. But your blood be on your own head. My poor husband has been ill for 10 days with some disease of the inside. However he's better now, & here we are, like a terrible couple, recuperating.

Haven't I been wonderfully discreet! Nurse Carrington & Ralph Jane & Jot married yesterday & I said nothing about it. Yet I was in the thick of it & gave motherly advice. Poor Carrington is a little uneasy, as indeed I should be in the circumstances, & they've left for Italy. She had to break the news to her mother, who endeavored to explain that there is a certain thing the man does on the first night. Joy fainting to a bee copulating on a flower — but the brute down — Carrington couldn't get her to proceed. I think that lump on the back is a gentleman bee " was as far as she got.

Then there's been a tragedy as usual — Michael Davies has been drowned bathing at Oxford — Arthur Davies' son. How annoying it is the way fate pursues them! —

He was extraordinarily nice, I believe — I've just had a letter from Madge, asking to come & stay with us at Hogarth, because Lytton dedicated his book to me, which she thinks a work of genius, & therefore there must be so much in common between us, & "I have never been able to reconcile myself to the Drabness of my part in life — I am scarcely grey at all. My hair is almost wholly black still" & so on. I'm afraid there's no way out of it. But I have arranged with Roger that we are going to put her through her paces. Now Madge, what's all this nonsense about Chastity?" I'm going to begin. & then I shall bring in the lover of the Schoolboys. Roger will be a very harrowing visit — think of all the questions & exclamations. We had a party the other night to tap Desmond — that is we had him & Molly, made him drink 2 bottles of wine, & then set Mrs Green to take down his talk in shorthand. It worked perfectly, as he talked for 2 hours, but Mrs Green says it is the dullest thing you can imagine to read. Molly has had her hair dyed, not very successfully I think. At last the dye is too much like the yolk of an egg on the top, leaving black beneath. She looks much younger, but rather shady & like someone at the Sea side — We didn't tell Desmond what we were doing, so don't write & tell him, with you, in one of your strange moods of expansive hilarity. Then Karin gave a Great tea party to have the honour of meeting Lady Colefax. I didn't go, on principle, being rather on the high brow about London society, & daily refusing invitations which other people would give their eyes, to accept. A splendid tea was spread, & Colefax never came. Poor old Karin is very open & humble, I must say, & takes this sort of thing like a nice merciful dog — which you & I wouldn't stand.

Now I have

no more news that I can think of — except that Gerald Ritchie is dead & buried, poor man, after rushing about London for six months, buying melons & grand pianos & ordering the police to shadow his wife. In short, he was not altogether compos, & Eugene is very glad to have him safe at Kensal Green. Affectionate I know you don't care for; so I will save you home. Art criticism, as you observe, is not my strong point; so I won't tell you what I thought of the Unknown Show. There was a large picture of a tea party in one room. Roger stands out quite unmistakable. Clutton Brock frowned upon him in the Times & made him very miserable.

Now, my lovely dolphin, with the spangled tail, the sea-blue eyes, & the heart of a fish, please rummage about for the old pen which Duncan saw somewhere or other a few days ago & write & tell me how you have reduced from me my solitary

15b[v]

non-admirer - for Eliot never admired me
damn him. Is it true that Clive is
chared round Paris by both the female
Cockatoos - one ~~[illegible]~~ outdoing the
other in elegance & artifice, & he
remains cool as a cucumber,
talking at the top of his voice about art &
civilisation & drinking enormous bumpers
with male companions? Madame
Gravé sends me hints of this. At least
I gather that Mary has a ruby coat all
sequins.

NYPL

We go back tomorrow: so tell
Duncan to address his letter there. And
do describe a dinner at a café &
how you artists talk. Please do.
Just scribble down about pictures & so on.
Who are the young artists nowadays?

Your B.

HAMILL 7/10/68

Dearest,

Hunter has written as you see. I have no letters – but perhaps you have? – or have you any of Father's?

God knows when I am to see you. Perhaps I might come over & spend a night Thursday or Friday next week? Only I can't be certain of the day, as I have have now taken a turn in the opposite direction. & wait for events which never happen – shut, of course, they will.

How are you? And is it true (I have it on good authority) that (but I must put it indirect) I mean have you forgotten me? Well, I don't mind if you have. So there. You'll miss my letters though in France. Leonard says you went. I have a bet on with Lytton about it.

Here is Nelly. so I must stop.

Yr B.

I suppose you won't come for the 24th? When Elsie will be here?

1921

I've been lent Lawrence's novel about Ottoline. Shall I ask if you can have it? It's fearfully long, but Ott: is there to the life, a Pipsy too.
The country is amazingly beautiful. I can't think why one don't live here.

16 Monks House
Rodmell.

Dearest,

Your account of Wodder filled me with delight. I rather expect your letter will have exterminated the beast, as I have never heard a word from her since our Dreadnought affair. I wrote & told her what I thought of her then. But what a pullulating master she is! I wish you could see her again & trounce her — or that I could. One forgets that there horrors still exist. My only triumph is that the Ritchies are furious with me for Mrs Hilbery: & Hester is writing a life of Aunt Anny to prove she was a shrewd & silent woman of business. But this is nothing to compare with Madge & Wodder.

I'm practically all right, & slept without a sleeping draught last night. I wish you'd ever undergo my horrors — bed for a week — no writing for 3 weeks — & milk & all the rest of it. We come back on Monday, & I'll come to tea one day next week.

My great & latest is that we're

making a beautiful garden room out of an a tool house
with a large windows & a view of the downs - Jen will
never see it, so I will say no more. But do you
think we could spout the Lawrence drawing of
Thackeray? Having bought the Porter picture, I'm rather
hard up, & yet improvements here are a great seduction.
Or did we sell it? I suppose this is the season for
Americans.

Do please write another letter. I get immense
pleasure out of them. Of course, I shared
Mary considerably more trying than Dorothea.
Jn fact I think Jen must be a miracle of
broad minded magnanimity - I mean what I meant
I think would be finding her there as a matter of
course. at 46. I would rather find Virginia Woolf.
By the way, Eliot was to dedicated at not dining
that night, & meeting Jen I suppose, that we must
set up another party. Tell me about May's
party. Don't go on the char a bang. They always
upset. Here are a few flowers. The garden is burnt up.
Jn't we get peas strawberries beans & lettuce - I sit
out most of the day reading the Waverley novels which are
superb & all last night I dreamt of Julian. We
were buying eclairs together.

Yr

NYPL

HAMILL 2/10/68

husbands row out of the flames. At least he dined here on his own asking; was friendly in the extreme; made out that he has given up drinking; advised me to go to Marx's new Dressmaker; & hopes that we shall meet constantly this Winter. I'm afraid he uses us as a hair shirt though. A severe intellectual dunce with the Woopes — & then a debauch on the sofa at River House.

Tell Duncan to write. 1923.

Hogarth House
Richmond.

Oct 24th 1921

Vi dearest,

Well. so you have arrived. The vision of large hats against a translucent sea & the white legs of prostitutes is I admit very attractive: oh & the butterflies: how they make my mouth water — the apollos. the white admirals. the sulphurs, the purple emperors; & Dolphin sitting on a terrace in flowered muslin drinking coffee out of a & first dipping an oblong piece of sugar in the coffee & nibbling the brown bit. Still I dont so why I shant write you a letter about yourself. But tell me — are there great spear shaped bunches of Cactus? Oleanders? Perhaps Oleanders are too romantic. I have enough without them.

Ottoline has been in London — in fact she has had another seizure in the grand style, racing up to the Thackeray hotel Bloomsbury, with her troupe, which now consists of Sydney Waterlow, Gertler, Brett & Countess Russell in order to catch Charlie Chaplin. Ott: says that Charlie Chaplin is the greatest, most genuine artist who has ever lived. She heard that he was to be at a party given by Wells. The does not know we Wells. She telephoned to Wells. She bought herself an Edwardian umbrella; put white feathers in her hair, & dressed herself in a sealing wax green silk crinoline; set off with Gertler, Sydney, Brett & Countess Russell; reached Wells'; demanded Charlie Chaplin; But he had not come. Whereupon she took up a commanding position in the middle of the room; Her influence is said to have struck people dumb even on the balcony: Countess Russell was sent scavenging to collect notabilities. And the Wells' utterly disappeared. She is said to wield her umbrella with astonishing aplomb. Alas! — we

were asked, & could not go, & this comes through Kotzliansky, who was on the balcony, & was dragged half across the room by Countess Russell. Then broke free, which created a very bad impression. At last Ottoline meeting him in the hall, opened her umbrella in his face. It is white silk, with tassels.

Do you know that when the Booths, Macnaghtens, Gore Brownes & Ritchies are alone in the family circle on Sunday night the talk often turns upon poor Vanessa & poor Virginia? What is so remarkable, according to Betty Meinertzhagen, (who came to tea to discuss her approaching suicide - she's an actress - too large a nose, the managers say; in desperation;) is that the Booths never argue about us or discuss us but merely state the facts, which are accepted with sweetness & resignation. "Clive Bell brought them into touch with people of bad character. It is untrue that Maynard Keynes is a friend of Clive Bell's. We have the greatest respect for Maynard Keynes. Roger Fry is, of course, a charlatan. You have only to see Vanessa & Virginia now to realise how unhappy they are. Could we have done more for them? No, dearest Dodo, we could not." It only remains to be said that Dodo goes through reverse operations constantly without a murmur, & has dedicated her eldest daughter, who wished to go to Newnham, to the care of old Mrs Booth who is 78, & lives alone at Gravadon. "The greatest pleasure in my life, she said to Betty, was to amuse my brothers in their holidays." But George is apt to be sentimental about you, & remembers how lovely you were long ago.

We have just bought a press for £70. & are turning the basement into a printing shop. Ralph comes every day. I walk through the woods of Richmond which are yellow, but the summer weather is like early May, & I think of you: oh & of lots other things: dont suppose I'm not completely disillusioned about you, & ready to throw myself into a life where you & Duncan are merely shadows upon doors — feathers — films — I dont know what all.

Now Laura's expenses are now £100 a year above her income. The trustees therefore say that we must somehow make this good. We owe her £2,000. There is however a sinking fund; in which they have invested some of her money every year, with a view to realising a capital sum in the year 1940. They propose that we should either mortgage this, or fund £100 a year between us. I am seeing Adrian, who is making investigations, on Friday, & will let you know. The trustees are affable, & do not wish to press us.

If it were not that my hair is falling I think I could still pick your

NYPL

HARVARD 6/1/66

18a

Hogarth House.

Sunday, Nov. 13th 1921

Dearest,

Yes Day, perhaps unkruly, that you write your letter on Friday, 5th Nov. (Guy Fawkes day). Well, I got it last night – Saturday, 12th. – I mention this to show how prompt I am. With Duncan in the house, though, I suppose one can't count upon getting letters posted. Why don't you turn out his pockets on Fridays? Why don't he write to me? He reminds me rather of the Lemur ape, who as you know gets all the other apes to feed it because it is too lazy to feed itself, & also too beautiful.

I think your plan about Keats is a very brilliant one. There would be no difficulty about printing some lines on every page; but don't ask me this sort of question, because I always get the answers wrong. However Leonard corroborates this. By the way, Rogers cover paper was not designed by Carrington; I got it from a little man in Holborn; it is clearly an imitation of the Kew Gardens cover. But you want to hear about Dorothea. I enclose a copy of the letter. I don't see that I was indiscreet; & I am sure I triumphed; last only with the mind. She came to tea, of course, with Kate; devoured huge quantities of muffin & cake; & so offended me with her moral depravity – her sheer unctuousness & obtuseness & stodge – that I was practically fainting. Really, she makes one dizzy with dislike. It all came over me at the first sight of her – Jane. She said how sly she is in her condescending way, & began to eat like a poor woman at a charity tea, fast, stealthily, every crumb, thanking me for with unsincere sweetness; but happily Leonard had her. He loathed her. They talked about Ceylon. Meanwhile poor dear old Kate half blind, all flurried & worn & misty, kept eating butter by mistake for bread & putting her cup down on the tea pot, crunched up in her chair, with her hat over her eyes, & those good leather gloves that she always wears, & shoes like some old statues. She told me about Laura – who

is the same as ever, & never stops talking, & occasionally says, "I told him to
go away" or "Put it down, then", quite sensibly; but the rest is
unintelligible. Then I was accosted by Dorothea. "Virginia, do you
like having that book about the Queen dedicated to you?" "I should.
It seems to me a very intimate kind of book. But I do not know
that I should like the Brahmans to read it, or the Americans.
You see, we can laugh in the right ~~way~~ places, because we understand;
they would laugh in the wrong, because they do not ~~laugh~~ understand.
I should not like that." Does that bring her back to you? —
her odious self complacency, her extreme brutality — I felt as if she had a
thick stick as well as a thick leg; & if I did anything unseemly she
would kick & beat. ~~Hardwar~~ She lives in a village, can't talk a
word of the language, which is Canarese; learns Sanskrit with a pundit, &
intends to expound the fallacies of Buddha. I pretended that I had not
heard ~~ghe~~ her book. Being ~~Greek~~ decisively vain, she was furious. "Then
you do not read your Literary Supplement. There was a very long review
of me there — ~~but~~ by an exceedingly ignorant man. I also had one in the
~~St~~ Indian Observer. That was slightly more intelligent." As she
stumped out of the house she drew herself up, pressed her hands to her
forehead & muttered some gibberish which she said was the Eastern
form of farewell upon leaving a dear friend for some time. "How
long will it be?" I asked. "Five years" she replied. — Thank God!

I have got ted away in my fervour. There were various other
things I had to tell you, but my hands are so cold I can scarcely write.
Winter is upon us; fog, frost, every horror. One creeps about the house
longing only for bed. Even without a cold, one's nose drips perpetually.
The influenza is rampant, & it is the fossy influenza, in which
all one's teeth drop out. Ralph is very obstinate & crude. He &
Leonard argue incessantly; & then appeal to me, & I have been thinking
about something else.

Oh but I must tell you! I am getting into mischief.

at least I think there is every probability that I shall be in Dorchester
within a day or two. It is all your husband. I told you how I had
a weird letter from him, regretting our separation - and so we
dined at 46 two nights ago, & there was Mary & Maynard &
Aldous Huxley; & as I was going Mary took my hand &
pressed it & said "I don't at all like this plan of quarrelling
with you. Will you come & see me — will you come next week? —
Will you come any time you like?" Please do." Of course I
pressed her hand - it is an exquisite claw & she has a new coral
bracelet - & said "yes"; & I am going. Well? ——

Lord! I've just remembered another bit of gossip - but this, on your
honour as a dolphin, you must only whisper to the waves of the
Mediterranean, if to them. You will see that indiscretion would have
very serious results. I should be ostracised - a long word - Ask Roger what
it means. You remember our friends the Waterlows. Well, Sydney has
been getting more & more intolerable. He goes down to Dare for the week end
& complains that the flowers have come up red when they ought to have
been blue. He complains of the eggs, & the beds, & the beef, & the pudding.
Nothing that Dawks can do, nothing that she can wear, say, or insinuate,
pleases him for a second. Yet her ~~rang~~ oven is the best in Wiltshire, her
Buff Orpingtons the admiration of the village, & her brats, though the
ugliest, the fattest & far their age, & the healthiest. This went on
all the summer — Sydney coming down, grumbling, going away again.
At last Dawks could stand it no longer. She determined to separate.
She refused to allow him to come. He sat in London & considered
what to do. He sent for Maynard. Dawks sent for Molly. after long
deliberation & envoys going to & fro - Dawks still refusing to see him —
He MacCarthys persuaded them to go to Germany for six weeks
alone together. They have just returned. No one knows yet what

the result is: but why trailing Dawks enter den linden for 6 weeks should relegate one to spending the rest genci days with her, I know not; or for that matter watching Sydney eating sausages in a beer garden. Molly's sympathies are all with Dawks. But the animals ought to be in the Zoo — that is my feeling. Please let none of this get to Gordon Square.

There was another piece of gossip much better than this one, on the tip of my pen: but I've entirely lost it as I wrote. What could it have been? Cunyhow, I've no room — We've been asked to Garsington — but that wasn't it; Lord Tennyson's recent marriage has turned out unhappily, & he finds his chief comfort in marching Nasby with Hester on his arm down the Ports walk at Freshwater; Hester finds it very comforting too — but that wasn't it; the Stephens are going to the Baltic in their yatcht; the Woolves are going to Rome; no; I've entirely forgotten what it was; & as you shan't have it until you have written me another letter; which you must post, for letters really aren't much good unless they are posted, remember. Dear old Saxon has broken our telephone. He rang me up every day for three weeks, without getting on once, with the result that our telephone sometimes rings all night, & when you go to answer it, there is no one there. Hey like Saxon.

Poor Bob Trevelyan — poor Bob Trevelyan — Well, I met Barry at the 1917 Club in a cold afternoon with her handbag & her sheat boots & her nice red Watch nose, & her liberal sympathies - one does fall in love with the Duchess of Marlborough - I did at once. She is taking Bob to the Doctor. The alarming thing is that he can't write. And Nowton comes out of his Retreat this week; so I shall retire to mine; & you'll never hear from me again, & how you'll survive that I can't think, though you must admit I've wanted a whole morning writing this letter, when I ought to have been stitching Rosa's woodcuts.

V B

Thanks for the cheque; & the photograph. Do send me a sketch of the place.

La Tropez.

NYPL

HAMILL 2/10/68

My doar Katharine;

I was just writing to ask you to come &c &c.

I shall be very glad to see you on Wednesday; but to be frank, I feel slightly awkward about seeing Dorothea; owing to her attitude to Vanessa. I dont want to exaggerate; but I am sure both you and Dorothea will undersatnd h my feeling.

Your affect V. W.

4 17c

My dear Dorothea;

I did nt mean this Wednesday; I meant next.

Your view that one cannot ask a friend who has put aside the recognised conventions anbout marriage to one's house because of outsiders and servants seems to me incomprehansible. You, for example, accept a religion which I and my servants, who are both ~~as it happens~~ agnostics, think wrong and indeed pernicious. Am I therefore to forbid you to come here for my servants sake? Yet I am sure you agree with me that religious beliefs are of far greater importance than social conventions. I am quite willing to ~~dispose~~ suppose that all you said to Vanessa was dictated by kindness and good will, though I do not think it struck her quite in the same way. Anyhow my point is different-- it is simply that I could not let you come here without saying first that I entirely sympathise with Vanessa's views and conduct--since , for your own reasons, you have drawn attention to them. If after this you like to come with Katharine, by all means do; and I will risk not only my own morals but my cooks.

Yours affly. V. W.